

Western Great Lakes



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Weather in the Region was mild in December but became more winter-like in January and February. The northern portions of the Region received heavy snows in January and February that remained through the end of the period. In Michigan, this snowfall reached near-record amounts in many northern locations. There was less snow in the southern portions of the Region, but the entire Region received very cold temperatures through much of January and February. The mild start to the season resulted in good numbers of lingering species in all three states, while the late cold weather kept any early migrants from returning. Minnesotans complained of a very dull season, with the only highlight being several Gyrfal-

cons. Wisconsin fared better, with several unusual records including Cinnamon Teal, Gyrfalcon, Mew Gull, California Gull, and a Spotted Towhee. Michigan had a very good season with Western Grebe, Rufous Hummingbird, Green-tailed Towhee, Spotted Towhee, and Lark Sparrow.

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

A Red-throated Loon 4 Jan from Manitowoc (AH, JHo) was the only report in Wisconsin, while Michigan had several reports, including 8 on 27 Dec at New Buffalo, Berrien (STe, PC, JW, BM). The Pacific Loon at Two Harbors, Lake remained until 7 Dec (PJ, JSt, JL, PS), a 3rd winter record for Minnesota. Red-necked Grebes lingered in Michigan, with reports coming from four counties. The Western Grebe in Munising Bay, Alger, MI was seen through 8 Dec (SHi), with another, or perhaps the same bird seen 20 Dec at Duluth (PS)—the 2nd latest record for Minnesota.

In Wisconsin, single American White Pelicans were present 4 Dec–10 Jan in Waukesha (AM, DG, DC, JHa, BD, MWi), 4–6 & 20 Dec in Brown (TE, DV, TB, IB), and 31 Dec–25 Feb in Winnebago (PB, RK). There are only three previous Dec records of this species in Wisconsin. Unexpected in Michigan was a Least Bittern on 21 Dec at Pointe Mouillee S.G.A., Monroe (AB, BM, STe, GB). Casual in Min-

nesota during the winter, a Black-crowned Night-Heron was reported on 6 Dec at Black Dog L., Dakota (WB). Also rare in Wisconsin in winter, Black-crowneds were found 14 Dec at Walworth (JBi) and 27 Dec and 6 Jan at Racine (DG). An early Turkey Vulture was reported 29 Feb in Minnesota at Caledonia, Houston (SM), while individuals lingered in Wisconsin through 22 Dec in Sauk and 27 Dec in Fond du Lac (BV).

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese were reported in four Wisconsin counties, the latest being on 2 Jan in Kewaunee (JJ), and spring migrants arrived in late Feb, with the highest total being 50+ in Dane 28 Feb (JP). Returning Greater White-fronteds arrived in Minnesota on 28 Feb, with 105 seen in Jackson and 24 in Nobles (PJa). In Michigan, where the species is much less common, one was present at Lake Michigan College until 6 Dec (JW, m. ob.), and 5 were found 28 Feb at L. Chapin (DVi), both locations in Berrien. Wisconsin had reports of Ross's Goose 29 Feb in Dane (AS) and Dodge (TP), while Minnesota had its 3rd earliest arrival, with 3 on 28 Feb in Jackson (PJa) and another 29 Feb at Rochester, Olmsted (JH, CB). Michigan had reports of singles on 8 Dec at Grewes L., Isabella (SH), 19 Dec at L. Chemung, Livingston (LH), 27 Dec along the Grand R., Ionia (KT), and 28 Feb at Allegan S.G.A., Allegan (JG), all pending review. The highest Trumpeter Swan numbers in the Region came from Minnesota, where 830 were found 6 Feb at Monticello, Sherburne/Wright (KB); the high total in Wisconsin was of 167 near Hudson 15 Feb (LP).

Two Cinnamon Teal of unknown provenance were reported 19 Dec–14 Jan in Crawford, MI (DE, SJ, KJ et al.). A Canvasback that overwintered at Red Wing, Goodhue (KL) was considered noteworthy in Minnesota, as was a Greater Scaup 23 Dec at Duluth, St. Louis (KB). High for Wisconsin were 900+ Red-heads reported 29 Dec in Door (RL, CL). Harlequin Ducks were reported throughout the Region, with singles in Wisconsin 7 Dec–4 Jan in Milwaukee (TW, MK, JF, DT) and 25–26 Feb in Racine (EH). In Minnesota, one overwintered in Two Harbors, Lake (m. ob.); another was reported 31 Dec–2 Jan on the French R., St. Louis. Michigan had records 11 Jan at Douglas, Allegan (SS) and 8–10 Feb at Wyandotte, Wayne (WP, AC, m. ob.). Casual in Minnesota in winter, a White-winged Scoter was reported 31 Dec on the French R. (fide DB). Also noteworthy were 7400 Common Goldeneyes 2 Dec on Pool 8 at the Upper Mississippi N.W.R. between Minnesota and Wisconsin (KB). Wisconsin had "numerous" reports of Barrow's Goldeneye from Milwaukee 7 Dec–3 Jan (TW, RHu, MK, TU, JF), though no clear total emerged. A high total of 48,200 Common Mergansers was recorded 5 Dec at L. Pepin, Goodhue/Wabasha, MN (KB).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

Golden Eagles were reported in five counties in Wisconsin, while in Michigan, 2 were reported throughout the period at the Muskegon Waste-water System, *Muskegon* (SH, KT, SJ, m. ob.). Gyrfalcons were reported from all three states: a single 10 Jan–3 Feb in *Douglas*, WI (CF, PS, JP, JHn, RJ et al.); 2 throughout the period at Sault Ste. Marie, *Chippewa*, MI (SJ, m. ob.); and Minnesota had singles 20 Dec+ at Duluth, *St. Louis* (DE, m. ob.), 11 Jan at Rosemount, *Dakota* (JM), and 5 Dec at Odessa Twp., *Big Stone* (BU). The only Prairie Falcon report came from Minnesota, where one was in Yellow Bank Twp., *Lac Qui Parle* 11 Dec (BU).

Record high for Minnesota was a count of 1030+ Ring-necked Pheasants 1 Feb in *Lac Qui Parle* and *Chippewa* (BU). In Wisconsin, Gray Partridges were reported in *Brown*, *Manitowoc*, and *Door*. Wild Turkeys have shown a 96% increase on Wisconsin C.B.C.s, as reflected by the 411 seen 6 Dec in *Adams* (SK). In Wisconsin, 2 Virginia Rails were found 3 Jan in *Columbia* (Ash), while Michigan had one 1 Jan in Lambertville, *Monroe* (KO, DFR). Also in Michigan, a Sora was present to 8 Dec in Grosse Pointe, *Wayne* (*vide* BR). Twelve Sandhill Cranes 29 Feb in *Houston* (SM) tied the early arrival date for Minnesota. A Pectoral Sandpiper 4–19 Dec at Finn Road Park, *Bay* (DD, MW, MH) was very late in Michigan. Also in that state, up to 2 Purple Sandpipers were present 6–29 Dec at Pere Marquette Park, *Muskegon* (JG, PC, m. ob.), with one 19–24 Dec at *Oscoda*, *Iosco* (SJ, m. ob.). Wisconsin had a Purple Sandpiper 3–4 Jan in *Milwaukee* (DC, JHf, TW). In Michigan, Dunlin lingered into late Dec. A Wilson's Snipe 5 Feb provided a first winter record for the Wisconsin county of *Portage* (MB).

The Laughing Gull in *Monroe*, MI stayed until 26 Dec (AB, PC, BM, m. ob.). Record late in Minnesota was a Franklin's Gull on 30 Dec at Black Dog L., *Dakota* (KB). The lone Little Gull report came from Michigan, where one was present 27 Dec at the Au Sable R. mouth, *Iosco* (REr). An ad. Mew Gull present from the fall in Wisconsin lingered through 3 Jan in *Milwaukee* (p.a., DG, TW, RHu). Also in Wisconsin, a California Gull was found in *Winnebago* 2 Jan (p.a., DT) and a probable third-winter bird was seen 3 Jan in *Milwaukee* (p.a., JI). A Thayer's Gull on 2 Dec at Lock and Dam #2, *Winona* (KB) provided a first record for that Minnesota county. Michigan reported Iceland Gulls from four counties, while in Minnesota first-winters were present from 20 Jan+ in Two Harbors, *Lake* (KE, JL, m. ob.) and on 31 Dec at Black Dog L., *Dakota* (JM). Wisconsin had Iceland Gulls 20 Dec–19 Jan in *Dane* (ES, ST, NP, MMc, CM), 20 Dec & 7 Jan in *Milwaukee* (TW, AP), 28 Dec in *Kewaunee* (JT, SP), and 14 Jan in *Sauk* (AH). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported inland in Wisconsin in *Dane* from 20 Dec–4 Jan (ST, AS, CM,

AHo) and *Walworth* (SF). A Glaucous Gull 1 Jan in Cerro Gordo Twp., *Lac Qui Parle* (BU) provided a rare record for w. Minnesota, though in the rest of the state the species was seen in above-average numbers in Dec, including up to 7 in *Dakota* (JMa, KB et al.). Glaucous Gulls were also seen in good numbers in Wisconsin, including inland records in *Dane*, *Sauk*, and *Columbia*.

DOVES THROUGH KINGLETS

Eurasian Collared-Doves reported in Minnesota included 6 in *Chippewa*, 7 in *Farmington*, *Dakota*, 3 in *Caledonia*, *Houston*, and one in Thief River Falls, *Pennington*. Wisconsin had as many as 3 in *Columbia* 3 & 28 Jan and 29 Feb (MFO, SFO), 3 in *Pepin* 27 Dec & 19 Feb (CK, JPo), and 3 on 1 & 22 Feb in *Oconto* (JS, KS). Seven were reported on the Traverse City C.B.C., *Grand Traverse* in Michigan and were seen on and off in Jan (p. a.). Care should be taken to in identification of Eurasian Collared-Doves, as Ringed Turtle-Doves and their hybrids with collared-doves are possible in our Region.

Snowy Owls were found in unremarkable numbers in the Region, with only 12 found in Minnesota and reports from three counties in Michigan and seven in Wisconsin. Minnesota had the bulk of the Northern Hawk Owl reports, with singles from *Cook*, *Lake*, *Lake of the Woods*, and *Roseau*, although Wisconsin had one 4 Jan–17 Feb in *Brunett* (JWi). The only Great Gray Owl reports came from Minnesota, where about 26 were reported from their typical n. range. Michigan had a good number of Long-eared Owl reports, with individuals found in *Schoolcraft*, *St. Clair*, *Van Buren*, *Washtenaw*, and *Wayne*. Wisconsin had reports from *Marquette*, *Rock*, *Oconto*, and *Dane*. Minnesota reported Short-eared Owls in better-than-average numbers, with reports from six counties and peaks of 7 in *Polk* and 9 in *Wilkin*. The only report of Boreal Owl for the winter was a bird found dead at the Wetlands, Pine and Prairie Audubon Sanctuary, *Polk*, MN, s. of normal. Michigan had an above-average number of Northern Saw-whet Owl reports this season, with individuals in eight counties, mostly along the southernmost tier.

A Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 7–12 Dec in *Milwaukee* (JI) provided Wisconsin its latest winter date. The Rufous Hummingbird present in the fall in Michigan at St. Joseph, *Berrien* (acc. AC, JW, KM) remained until 26 Dec, while another from the fall in *Calhoun* (acc.; *vide* JW) remained to the same date. There were two reports of American Three-toed Woodpecker in Minnesota, with 2 on 8 Jan in *Beltrami* Island S.F. (MKe) and one near Big Falls, *Koochiching* (KB). A Black-backed Woodpecker in that state 15 Feb in *Isanti* (SW) was s. of normal. Wisconsin had only one Black-backed Woodpecker report, one 14 Dec in *Vilas* (JBi). S. of normal in Minnesota were Common Ravens 13 Feb at *Lac Qui Parle* L., *Lac Qui Par-*

le (BU) and 3 Jan in *Kingston Twp.*, *Meeker* (DFI), both first county records.

Very late in Michigan was a Barn Swallow 5 Jan at Coopersville S.P., *Ottawa* (DS). Unexpected in Michigan was a Rock Wren 7–21 Dec at the Au Sable R. mouth, *Iosco* (SJ, BH, m. ob.). Carolina Wrens were well reported in the w. part of the Region, with reports from five counties each in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Casual in Minnesota in winter were Marsh Wrens through 24 Jan at Bass Ponds (SC et al.) and 6–21 Dec at Coleman L. (SC), both in *Hennepin*. Ruby-crowned Kinglets lingered in Michigan, with reports from three counties.

THRUSHES THROUGH WARBLERS

Minnesota had fewer than normal Townsend's Solitaires, with individuals 1 Jan in *Hantho Twp.*, *Lac Qui Parle* (BU), 21 Feb near Pipestone N.M., *Pipestone* (RE), and 17 Jan at *Lanesboro*, *Fillmore* (JH et al.). Wisconsin had an average number of reports, with individuals 24 & 28 Jan in *Sauk* (AS, TP, DT) and 2 on 16 Feb in *Portage* (JS, TO). A single bird 16 Dec–Jan at *Marquette*, *Marquette* (SHi, LT) was typical for Michigan. Minnesota had Varied Thrush reports from only five counties this season, while Wisconsin had reports from four. In Michigan, where the species has been increasingly rare over the past few winters, there was an individual 8 Dec in *Bridgeman*, *Berrien* (KK). A Gray Catbird 2 Dec in *Dakota* (CM) was a good find in Minnesota, where the species is casual in winter; singles 4–31 Dec in *Detroit*, *Wayne*, MI (KO) and 13 Dec in *Brown*, WI were less unusual (DV). Exceptional in Michigan was an American Pipit 10 Feb in *Berrien*, while Wisconsin reported one 5–22 Dec in *Racine* (EH, SF, DG). Notable in Wisconsin was a high of 140 Bohemian Waxwings 1 Jan in *Vilas* (JBi). Two Yellow-throated Warblers graced Michigan this winter, one 1–2 Dec in *Romeo*, *Macomb* (KO) and the other 12 Dec–20 Jan at *Grand Rapids*, *Kent* (SJ).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Two Summer Tanagers were reported from Michigan: on the Rogers City C.B.C. (BG) and a continuing bird through 3 Dec in *Mantsee* (KW). Michigan hosted a Green-tailed Towhee 13 Dec–1 Feb in *Livonia*, *Wayne* (p.a., AC, SJ, m. ob.), and a Spotted Towhee 13 Dec–25 Feb in *Hamburg Twp.*, *Livingston* (p.a., AC, JL) would be only the 2nd for Michigan. A Spotted Towhee in *Wausessa*, WI lingered through period (DG). Wisconsin had a good number of Chipping Sparrow with reports coming from five counties, plus a late Vesper Sparrow 14 Dec in *Columbia* (KBU, BD) and Savannah Sparrows 27 Dec in *Walworth* and 20 Dec in *Dane* (ST). A Lark Sparrow 24–25 Jan & 29 Feb in *Dearborn*, *Wayne* (JC, DO, AC) provided one of few winter records in Michigan. A Lincoln's Sparrow lingered in Wisconsin through 17 Dec in *Grant*, (ASH) while another was present in

Michigan 1–29 Dec in Detroit, Wayne (KO). Also in those states, single Harris's Sparrows were seen 5 Feb in Brown, WI (NW) and 19–22 Jan in Watervliet Twp., Berrien, MI (DCh).

Single **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were rare lingerers in Michigan 4–5 Dec in Benton Twp., Berrien (CW), through late Dec in Davisburg, Oakland (BM), and 3 Jan–Feb in Baraga (BA). Also in that state was an unexpected **Indigo Bunting** that lingered through 20 Dec in Houghton (JK). Rare so late in Wisconsin were the single **Baltimore Orioles** 2 Dec–7 Jan in Dane (ST, RW; only the 3rd post-Dec record) and 13 Dec in Brown (TB, IB). Michigan also reported this species 22–26 Dec in Chickaming Twp., Berrien (TBa, JPe) and through 20 Jan in Alpena, Alpena (BG). Pine Grosbeaks were found in excellent numbers in n. Michigan and Wisconsin. Other winter finches were sporadic and found in lower numbers, with exception of redpolls, which were present in good numbers, particularly Hoary Redpolls in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Observers (subregional editors in boldface): Tim Baerwald (TBa), **Karl Bardon** (Minnesota), Ida Baumann, Ty Baumann, Glenn Belyea, Chris Benson, Dave Benson, Murray Berner, John Bielefeldt (JBi), Paul Bruce, William Bruins, Kay Burcar (KBU), Adam Byrne, Steve Carlson, Diane Chandler (DCh), Allen Chartier, Daryl Christensen, Phil Chu, Julie Craves, Bob Domagalski, Dan Duso, Kim Eckert, Roger Erickson (REr), Tom Erdman, Ron Erpelding, Dave Evans, Craig Faanes, Sean Fitzgerald, Dan Floren (DFI), Mark Foote-Martin (MFO), Sue Foote-Martin (SFO), **Jim Frank**, Darlene Friedman (DFr), Dave Fritz, Jim Granlund, Bill Grigg, Dennis Gustafson, Lyle Hamilton, Jan Hansen (JHn), Judy Haseleu (JHa), Skye Haas, Etter Hale, Scott Hickman (SHi), John Hockema, Bob Holdreigh, Aaron Holschbach, Jim Holschbach (JHo), Allen Holzhueter (AHO), Mark Hubinger, Judith Huf (JHD), Robert Hughes (RHu), John Idzikowski, Joe Jacyna, Paul Jantscher (PJa), Scott Jennex, Per Johanssen, Karen Johnson, Robbye Johnson, Scott John-

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Iowa & Missouri

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It was unseasonably mild for the first half of the season, but around 15 January, it turned into one of those winters that only kids like—cold, lots of snow, and lots of snow days. Waterfowl exited all but the Mississippi River by early January, quickly followed by gulls. Two Mississippi River gull hotspots produced good birds throughout the season: the Davenport, Iowa area and the Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area north of St. Louis. Curiously, of three Arctic raptor species, two—Rough-legged and Northern Shrike—appeared in unusually high numbers, while Snowy Owl was unreported for the first time in many years.

The snow cover of the last half of the season produced high counts of open-country species, but was boom or bust for winter finches. Invasion status could be conferred on Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin (at least in Iowa), and it was a very good year for Purple Finch. Conversely, neither crossbill was reported, nor were any of the more esoteric species such as Pine and Evening Grosbeaks. Although the last half of the season's weather was harsh, it did not prevent an early return of numerous species. For example, waterfowl, American Robins, and icterids began trickling into Iowa between 18